



# National Wilderness Update

*Winter/Spring/Summer/Fall 2019*

## 2018 NPS Wes Henry Wilderness Awardees

The National Park Service (NPS) Director's Wes Henry Excellence in Wilderness Stewardship Awards are the NPS's annual recognition of outstanding contributions to wilderness stewardship by an individual, group/team, and non-governmental partner, including those involving interpretation and education; management of natural, cultural, and social resources; planning; protection; and maintenance operations. Award recipients are nominated by fellow NPS staff and selected by an interdisciplinary panel. The following award recipients were recognized during an awards ceremony in August 2019 in Washington DC.

### Individual Award: Adrienne Lindholm

Adrienne Lindholm, Wilderness Program Coordinator for the Alaska Region, has made outstanding contributions to wilderness stewardship at the park, regional, and national levels for almost 20 years. She has proactively developed tailored wilderness trainings and management tools to assist staff throughout the region. Her accomplishments include creating important resources for the field, like the Minimum Requirements Analysis Short Form, and co-developing an online interagency course that describes wilderness in the context of the Alaska National Interest Lands Conservation Lands Act. In her ongoing role as Regional Wilderness Coordinator, Adrienne has raised the level of awareness and understanding of



2018 Wes Henry Award recipients. NPS photo.

wilderness throughout Alaska by coordinating the interdisciplinary Backcountry and Wilderness Advisory Group, regularly engaging the NPS Alaska Leadership Council on wilderness issues, and fostering interagency relationships. Nationally, Adrienne has been an integral team member on national wilderness work groups and served as the 2018 Chair for the NPS National Wilderness Leadership Council.

### Team Award: Fire Island NS Breach Management Plan Team

In 2012, Hurricane Sandy impacted a wide swath of New York and New Jersey, including

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Fire Island NS. The hurricane created a breach in the barrier island within the Otis Pike Fire Island High Dune Wilderness, and the NPS was called into action to determine how to manage it. Accordingly, in 2015 the NPS began preparation of a draft Fire Island Wilderness Breach Management Plan and Environmental Impact Statement (EIS), which evaluated three alternatives.

During the public review and planning process, there was both support for and opposition to closing the breach. As time went on, and more science became available, concern on flooding eased, while support for allowing the breach to remain open stayed steady. The 'no human intervention unless criteria are exceeded' alternative became the NPS preferred alternative in the 2017 final EIS, and ultimately the selected alternative in the 2018 Record of Decision.

The seashore's Breach Management Plan Team completed a complex EIS within a three year period, shepherding the Plan through planning, public comment, and compliance processes. This strong interdisciplinary team worked collaboratively to achieve the NPS mission while navigating difficult questions around ecology, wilderness stewardship, wilderness character, naturalness, and management objectives.

### **Non-Government Partner Award: Leave No Trace Center for Outdoor Ethics**

The Leave No Trace Center for Outdoor Ethics (LNT), a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization, has made highly significant and positive effects on preserving wilderness character throughout the NPS and the National Wilderness Preservation System (NWPS). In 1987, a "no trace" program was formed for wilderness and backcountry travel. In 1993, an Outdoor Recreation Summit with land management agencies, NGOs and members of the outdoor industry convened

to form an independent LNT organization -- establishing LNT in 1994. This same year, LNT entered into the first of a series of Memorandums of Understandings (MOUs) with federal land management agencies, including the NPS. NPS continues to maintain this formal relationship as one of the longest in NPS history.

Today, LNT reaches over 15 million Americans each year with conservation initiatives, education, training, research, and outreach. Specific programs initiated in NPS sites include the "Hot Spot" program, the "Travelling Trainers" program, the "Leave No Trace in Every Park" program, and the "Zero Landfill" program. In 2019, LNT is celebrating their 25th anniversary of promoting and inspiring responsible outdoor recreation on America's public lands, including NPS wilderness.

### **National Wilderness Leadership Council Holds 2019 Annual Meeting**

The NPS National Wilderness Leadership Council (NWLC) convened their annual meeting in August at Pictured Rocks NL to discuss current and emerging topics in wilderness stewardship, review work completed in FY2019, and identify focus areas for FY2020. The NWLC - an interdisciplinary council of NPS staff from parks, regions, and national offices - serves as an advisory body to NPS leadership on all matters pertaining to wilderness stewardship. The NWLC said goodbye to outgoing Chair Adrienne Lindholm (Region 11) and outgoing members Blair Davenport (Regions 8/9/10/12), Fred Herling (Everglades NP), Ruth Scott (Olympic NP), and Kevin Sweeney (Lassen Volcanic NP), and welcomed incoming Chair Woody Smeck (Sequoia-Kings Canyon NPs) and Vice-Chair

## **WILDERNESS DOWNLOAD**

*A quick review of immediate + upcoming wilderness happenings*

### **SEEKING NPS WILDERNESS PHOTOS FOR 2019 WILDERNESS REPORT COVER**

Do you have a high resolution photo of NPS wilderness that you'd like to see on the cover of the 2019 NPS National Wilderness Report? Extra points for photos featuring people! Please share your high res photos (3200 x 2400px and 300 dpi).

### **NPS WILDERNESS YOUTUBE CHANNEL**

Did you know there 15+ videos on the [NPS Wilderness YouTube channel](#) that feature unique, place-based experiences shared between people and wilderness? These short videos are available for streaming or download, and make excellent tools for trainings, meetings, websites, social media, and interpretive/educational programming.

### **NPS WILDERNESS DATABASE NEEDS**

[NPS National Wilderness Database](#) is open for data validation by all wilderness parks. This database serves as the go-to location for all pertinent wilderness data, including acreages, stewardship tracking, and contacts.

### **WILDERNESS EXHIBIT AVAILABLE FOR LOAN**

The [NPS wilderness exhibit](#) is available for use in park visitor centers or program offices. The host park pays for shipping (~\$100 total). Exhibits are available for up to 12 weeks.

### **UPCOMING INTERAGENCY TRAININGS**

Find a full list of in-person and online trainings at the [Arthur Carhart National Wilderness Training Center](#). 2020 interagency Regional Wilderness Stewardship Courses include:

- Palm Springs, CA (2/24-2/27 2020)
- Fort Collins, CO (5/18-5/21 2020)
- Fort Myers, FL (9/14-9/17 2020)

*Please email Erin Drake ([erin\\_drake@nps.gov](mailto:erin_drake@nps.gov)) for more info about Download items.*



Jenn Flynn (Shenandoah NP). For FY2020, the Council will explore ways to support ongoing wilderness stewardship, training, and capacity-building efforts servicewide, and wrap-up existing work group efforts. These work groups will:

- Finalize the *Guidelines for Evaluating Ecological Intervention Proposals in NPS Wilderness*
- Conduct remaining reviews and finalize the *Wilderness Interpretation and Education Strategy*
- Conduct remaining reviews and finalize *Cultural Resources in Wilderness: Guidance for Considering and Managing Cultural Resources*
- Conduct remaining reviews and finalize guidance on fixed anchors and other climbing issues in wilderness
- Conduct remaining reviews and finalize guidance for the development and use of programmatic Minimum Requirements Analysis
- Conduct remaining reviews and finalize the technical guide for implementing 'strongly encouraged measures' for wilderness character monitoring
- Produce a tool to help parks evaluate commercial filming applications in wilderness

## Wilderness Character Training Success Continues for Fourth Year

The 1964 Wilderness Act introduced the term 'wilderness character' and further states that the federal agencies that manage wilderness, including the NPS, are responsible for preserving wilderness character. In 2019, 23 NPS staff and partners gathered for a training in Colorado's central Rocky Mountains to learn more about this preservation mandate. The NPS Preservation of Wilderness Character Training, hosted by the Wilderness Stewardship Division with financial support from WASO Learning and Development, offers a three-day deep dive into

the complexities of wilderness character and the tactical steps that can be taken to preserve this important concept in wilderness parks. This is the fifth offering of the course (in four years).

## Wilderness Character Monitoring Reminder

- ☒ I work in a wilderness NPS unit
- ☒ My park has completed a wilderness character baseline assessment
- ☒ The baseline year for the assessment is 2015 or earlier

If you too can check all three of these boxes, please consider making preparations for your first five-year monitoring interval. Not sure what this entails? Review [Keeping It Wild 2](#) and email Erin Drake ([erin\\_drake@nps.gov](mailto:erin_drake@nps.gov)) to learn more.

## Wilderness Stewardship Resource Briefs Library Available and Growing

Find yourself in need of a succinct way to describe a fundamental wilderness stewardship concept to your staff, leadership, or partners? Discussing wilderness in a way that is both accurate and accessible can be challenging. The Wilderness Stewardship Division has an ever-growing library of [wilderness stewardship resource briefs](#) [viewable by NPS/DOI staff only] to help. From information about the Minimum Requirements Analysis process, to wilderness character, to the recreational opportunities available in wilderness, these resource briefs identify talking points and can even be used as handouts in meetings and trainings.

... SAVE THE DATE ...

**Preservation of Wilderness Character Training**  
May 5-7, 2020 in Baraboo, WI

Email Erin Drake ([erin\\_drake@nps.gov](mailto:erin_drake@nps.gov)) for the training application



Shenandoah Wilderness, NPS/Katy Cain.

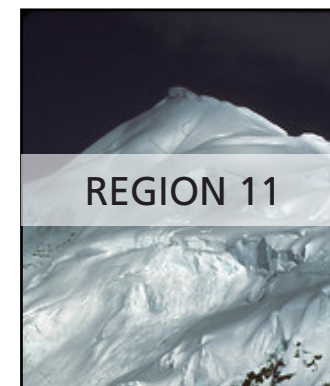
# REGIONAL HIGHLIGHTS

All eleven of the Department of Interior consolidated regions have designated and/or other categories of wilderness. Clustered regions have an identified Regional Wilderness Coordinator that works closely with wilderness park staff and the WASO Wilderness Stewardship Division. The following are highlights from each regional cluster:

## Alaska Wilderness Parks and Preserves Grow Capacity and Preserve Wilderness Character

Denali NP+Pr and Gates of the Arctic NP+Pr created a new shared wilderness coordinator position and hired Kristin Pace to serve in that role. At Gates of the Arctic, one of the first priorities utilizing the new position was to develop a wilderness character monitoring framework and complete the baseline assessment. Interpretive rangers and interns are integral to aspects of this monitoring effort, where they spend eight days at a time in the wilderness mapping miles of social trails, recording negatively impacted sites, and recording overflights and other human made noise. They have also paid yearly visits to the park's two National Natural Landmarks to record the effects of high visitation on the wilderness values in these well-visited areas.

Wrangell-St. Elias NP+Pr has collaborated with the Alaska Eastern Area Fire Management Team to reduce helicopter flights in wilderness by cooperatively conducting mandatory risk assessments of structures in remote locations. The park's wilderness program has worked with the fire management team to learn their data collection protocols and coordinate wilderness and backcountry patrols (and other park fieldwork) to visit the sites and collect the data. During 2018 and 2019, park staff collaborated in assessing 57 sites.



## Craters of the Moon NP+Pr Collaborate with Partners on Wilderness Stewardship Program

In 2019, staff from the US Forest Service and NPS collaborated to expand the Idaho Conservation League's Wilderness Stewardship Program into Craters of the Moon NP+Pr. The Craters of the Moon National Wilderness Area was one of two NPS wilderness areas designated in 1970 - tying it with the Petrified Forest National Wilderness Area for the first wilderness area ever designated in the NPS. Following a collaborative training session, volunteers conducted patrols through several federal wilderness areas, including the wilderness of the park and preserve. After a successful summer, staff and volunteers from all three organizations are looking forward to continuing to build the program to foster a deeper appreciation for the wild places we love.

## Regional Wilderness Executive Committee Identifies 2020 Priorities

The Regions' Wilderness Executive Committee convened in October for their annual meeting in Lakewood, CO. The twelve-person committee represents different wilderness parks and interdisciplinary positions from across the region, with committee members serving three-year terms. This meeting was also attended by Regional Environmental Coordinator Dan Niosi, Regional Chief of Planning and Compliance Jeremy Sweat, NPS Wilderness Stewardship Division (WSD) Chief Roger Semler, and WSD Communications and Outreach Specialist Erin Drake. The committee set 2020 priorities for wilderness stewardship, communications, and training to support wilderness character preservation in the region's parks. This includes committee assistance with park-based wilderness character monitoring, wilderness coordinator communication, and wilderness stewardship training for NPS staff.

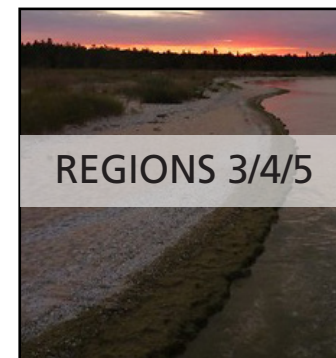


# REGIONAL HIGHLIGHTS (CONTINUED)

## Buffalo NR Provides Leave No Trace Training to Staff and Partners

In partnership with the Leave No Trace (LNT) Center for Outdoor Ethics, the interpretation team at Buffalo NR has trained and certified 50 LNT Master Educators and Trainers since 2018. Of these newly certified LNT instructors, most have ties to partner organizations or park concessionaires that routinely use and promote the Buffalo National River Wilderness. Representatives from the Backcountry Horsemen of America, Buffalo National River Partners, Ozark Highlands Trail Association, Boy Scouts of America, Girl Scouts of the USA, Arkansas Canoe Club, NPS Volunteer-in-Parks Program, Geoscientists-in-the-Parks program, and three park concessionaires have become certified at Buffalo NR so far. The two- to five-day courses are offered at least twice per year at the park's Research Learning Centers, training outdoor leaders in experiential teaching techniques that invite others to explore the outdoors responsibly, using minimum-impact recreational practices. In 2019, two courses were offered, training 17 staff and partners. As part of Buffalo NR's volunteering program, each of the trainers is asked to perform at least 30 hours of LNT education per year in their respective organizations and communities -- this investment in volunteers helps to cultivate stewardship beyond the boundaries of Buffalo NR.

Sleeping Bear Dunes NL is embarking on a wilderness stewardship planning process. The lakeshore completed a Wilderness Character Narrative and Baseline Assessment in 2017. This October, staff from the Wilderness Stewardship Division and Midwest Regional Office conducted a unit training course at the lakeshore. Following the course, staff were highly motivated to form a Wilderness Steering Committee and to begin the process of developing a Wilderness Stewardship Plan.



## Shenandoah NP Looks Towards Restoring Wilderness Lands

In August 2016, a consent decree issued by the US District Court for the District of Maryland made \$800,000 available to both Shenandoah NP and the Monongahela National Forest for "the restoration of land, watersheds, vegetation, and forests" to "mitigate" the harmful effects from decades of acidic deposition. Watersheds in the southwest portion of the park, within the Shenandoah Wilderness, are of a sandstone geology and have little buffering capacity – these areas have been harmed by acid deposition and streams are listed as pH-impaired via the Clean Water Act. Such impacts are directly related to diminishments in the Natural Quality of wilderness character and can be improved through thoughtful and selective restoration. In 2019, the park worked with many NPS colleagues and contractors to prepare a NEPA process and evaluate a landscape restoration proposal involving the application of limestone sand across the landscape. A recent civic engagement process indicated general support for this wilderness restoration effort, which would be the first such restoration attempt in the NPS.

## Southeast Parks Make Progress on Completing Wilderness Eligibility Assessments

In September, the NPS published Notices in the Federal Register concluding the wilderness eligibility assessment process for both Big South Fork NR+R and Obed NWSR. The Notices announced that none of the lands in either unit was eligible for wilderness designation at this time. At present, 18 units in the Southeast remain to be assessed (or re-assessed) for wilderness eligibility. Completing these assessments will be a priority of the regional wilderness program in the years to come.

